



LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

December 9, 2009

BOARD PRESENT: Gail Bailey, Art Brodsky, Richard Bryant, David Chiles, Paulette Dickerson, Kay Kim, Jill Lewis, Otto Lewis, Althea Grey-McKenzie, Lois Neuman, Frank Riccardi

STAFF PRESENT: B. Parker Hamilton, Director; Regina Holyfield-Jewett, Recording Secretary

The Library Board meeting was convened by Vice Chair Grey-McKenzie at 7:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES:

Minutes from the October 14, 2009 meeting were approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Introductions

New Board members, Richard Bryant and Frank Riccardi, introduced themselves, followed by the introduction of all Board members.

Interview of Applicants

There are twelve (12) applicants to be interviewed for the two (2) vacant positions on the Board. Chair Brodsky would like the applicants to be interviewed as soon as possible to maintain interest. Tuesday, December 15 and Thursday, December 17 have been selected as possible interview dates. Regulation requires that the Nomination Committee be comprised of a staff person and at least two Board members.

Request was made for a Persian book collection to be housed in the MCPL system, specifically at Rockville Library. Parker indicated that she was meeting with the requestor and that all such requests should go directly to the Department.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Branch Activities

Branch staff are wearing bright yellow buttons to encourage customers to sign up for **email notification**. It is part of Libraries' green/paper-saving initiative. Board members who are not signed up for email notification are encouraged to do so. Those who are already signed up are encouraged to verify that their email addresses on file are correct. There are great advantages: notices are sent out one day and three days prior to the due date of the materials; books can be placed on hold and renewed online. The campaign will run through January and then be evaluated.

Permission was received from the County Executive to **close branches** at 5:00 p.m. on both Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve and to be closed on the Saturdays after Christmas and New Year's Day. The request was made due to the fact that staffing is low and that employees were asking to take leave making it difficult to keep the building open.

The **Pharos system** is being upgraded. Some problems have been experienced with the server during the upgrade. Signs have been posted in the branches letting customers know that printers are down and that money cannot be added to their print accounts. It is hoped that the system will be back up next week with the new server.

A change has been proposed in MCPL's **meeting room policy**. Currently, the County does not rent meeting rooms to for-profit organizations; Libraries is recommending that this policy be changed. If the policy is changed, priority will be given to the Department, non-profit organizations including the LACs and FOL, and then for-profit organizations. MCPL has wanted to partner with a number of institutes, but because they charge, Libraries was not able to do so. For example, the Confucius Institute of the University of Maryland wanted to partner with Libraries to offer language classes, but because they charged, the opportunity was lost. By changing the policy, MCPL will be able to form stronger educational partnerships and also generate revenue.

On Saturday, Mr. Leggett helped Libraries unveil the new **Video Relay System** for the deaf and hard of hearing. Instead of using the TTY in order to communicate, the person is in front of a video camera using sign language. There is a system at Rockville, Germantown and on the desk of Susan Cohen, Librarian at Rockville. This system is another way to provide access and a high level of customer service.

Circulation is up and **programming** is down. The **Check Us Out** program guide is on the website; another way of reducing paper and saving money. Some paper copies will be printed, but staff is encouraging customers to go to the website to access the information.

In January the County will do a soft opening of the **MC311 system**. Libraries advocated for, and received permission to continue to answer library questions. Because a Master's Degree in Library Science or a Bachelor's Degree with training is required to answer information questions, not just anyone can provide answers. When the County telephone numbers are transferred to 311, MCPL will retain their numbers so that customers will be able to call Libraries directly, either Ask-a-Librarian or a branch. MCPL telephone numbers will continue to be published in the telephone book and not listed as 311. Suzanne Carbone, Virtual Services Branch Manager, can attend the next Board meeting to provide additional information.

Damascus Library has again expressed their concern about not having a liaison for their LAC. It was communicated that this was discussed by the Board in the October meeting: two new board members are coming onboard; assignments will be made; and someone will be at the next Damascus LAC meeting.

In February, Director Hamilton would like to bring a **revenue package idea** to the Board. MCPL needs to figure out how to generate revenue. Because the Board sets fees, ideas will be put forth for feedback.

The Board has \$35K in their **subsidiary account** and a decision on how it is to be spent needs to be made.

Discussion held regarding the origin of the money and ways the money can and cannot be spent. Ideas included supplementing the materials budget, VRSs for other branches, discovery overlays to update the website, and scholarships for staff. Board members will brainstorm and bring ideas back to the next meeting. A decision will need to be made by March.

FOL Grants/LEAP

The FOL Grants Committee met, and Ari Brooks, FOL Executive Director, has requested a meeting with Director Hamilton to discuss LEAP. After meeting with Ms. Brooks, Director Hamilton will have a better idea if there is additional money needed for the program.

Council Action

Nancy Floreen is the new Council **president** and Valerie Ervin is the **vice president**.

Budget

Council accepted Mr. Leggett's recommended **savings plan** for the Library Department. The materials budget was cut by \$1.3M. There is another gap of \$70M that the County will have to close for FY10. It is expected that directions will be given for an FY10 Savings Plan part II.

The **FY11 budget** was submitted. The review process will be gone through with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and then with Mr. Leggett who will make his recommendations to Council.

Library Summit

The consensus of the Board members who attended was that the Summit was well attended, the program was excellent and the speakers were engaging and motivating.

Mr. Leggett spent the entire day (9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) at the Summit. He felt the day went very well. He knows the challenge now is to come up with a strategic plan, a technology plan and a facilities plan. If the priorities that came out of the Summit match what MCPL is currently doing in the strategic plan, he is willing to extend that plan and not require a new one to be written.

A thank you letter was sent from Mr. Leggett to all attendees in which he made a commitment to bring everyone back together in six months to touch base and ensure that the work that was promised is getting done. Althea Grey-McKenzie indicated that in six months we would be approaching the Annual Meeting in June 2010 and perhaps another Summit/follow-up could occur at that time.

Discussion regarding cafés Mr. Leggett would like to see in branches. Currently, cafés are planned for Gaithersburg, Silver Spring, and if space permits, in renovated buildings.

A MCPL Facebook is being created to engage and generate interaction among the Summit attendees.

Other Announcements

Montgomery County Public Libraries has been ranked as a **three-star library system** in the *Library Journal*. Four measures were looked at in order to make the determination: 1) circulation, 2) visits, 3) program attendance and 4) public internet use. Based on these four criteria, the residents of Montgomery County use the library system well. The ranking was based on the 2007 statistics submitted to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a national, non-government organization.

At the **State of the County address**, a video was shown in which people were interviewed regarding why they lived in Montgomery County and what they liked about the County. A young girl spoke about the library, and how she used the library every day. In Mr. Leggett’s speech, he talked about the benefits of the unique strength of our community:

- proximity to Washington, D.C.;
- an international hub for life sciences;
- the low unemployment rate;
- the vibrant communities;
- the outstanding higher institutions;
- the world-class public school system;
- and the exceptional public libraries.

LAC BUSINESS:

LAC Assignments

Art Brodsky	Wheaton and Twinbrook
Richard Bryant	Little Falls and Aspen Hill
David Chiles	White Oak, Kensington Park and Quince Orchard
Paulette Dickerson	Noyes, CRC, Gaithersburg, Correctional Center
Althea Grey-McKenzie	Germantown and Silver Spring
Kay Kim	Long Branch, Praisner and Potomac
Jill Lewis	Davis and DRC
Otto Lewis	Olney, Chevy Chase and FOL
Lois Neuman	Bethesda and Poolesville
Frank Riccardi	Damascus and Rockville

LAC Brochures

Jim Stewart, Agency Manager for Marilyn Praisner, has requested more LAC brochures in order to generate interest in their LAC and recruit new members. The Board approved the printing of one hundred LAC brochures for Marilyn Praisner.

LAC Handbook

The reviewed handbook was received today from Connie Latham, Special Assistant to the County Executive. The main concern coming from Ms. Latham and the County Attorney was the use of the word “advocacy.” The charter does not allow for the Library Board to advocate; that word needs to be taken out. Director Hamilton is following up with Ms. Latham to determine if the words “advise” and “counsel” can be used instead of “advocate.” Ms. Hamilton noted that other State library systems, unlike MCPL, are not part of county government, and therefore, can say and do things that MCPL cannot. MCPL has other County departments, such as the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, that advocate and lobby on behalf of Libraries. The Board members will develop a list of words that can be used instead of “advocate.” There were other minor changes that needed to be made to the handbook including adding language regarding the open meetings act.

LAC Applications

The Board voted unanimously to approve all the submitted LAC applications.

LAC Achievement Awards

The LAC Awards Subcommittee will meet via email to discuss the process and review the forms. Board liaisons should encourage LAC members to apply.

There are five awards: LAC Membership Award; LAC Member Award (individual and LAC); Eleanor Ablard Award and the LAC Liaison Award.

David Chiles and Parker Hamilton will work with Michele Sellars, Public Services Administrator, for publicity for the awards.

LAC Updates

Aspen Hill LAC is very interested in guidance on how LACs are to comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act, and that the Library Board begin the process for requesting the abandonment of the unbuilt portion of Landgreen Street (which abuts the Aspen Hill Library property). Parker Hamilton indicated that the letter was received and that she is investigating which department to direct the letter. Elliot Chabot sent a letter to Ms. Hamilton and all Board Members regarding this concern.

The **Gaithersburg LAC** met with Councilmember Knapp on November 16 at the library. Councilmember Knapp was presented with handouts regarding the renovation, the branch as it is, staffing, circulation and foot traffic. A representative from the English Language Conversation Club attended and presented information on how the library was used in that way. It was a very good turn out; four or five members of the LAC and the chair attended. Councilmember Knapp spent a half hour at the library during which time he toured the facility. Even though the visit was held during one of the slowest times of day for the library (11:00 a.m.), Mr. Knapp commented on how busy the library was. Councilmember Knapp asked good questions and seemed happy to be there and shown around the building. One of the things he talked about was the possibility of running an English Language Conversation Club at another venue while the library is closed for renovation. He even suggested possible venues for this to happen. He stated that it would be beneficial if the library could do more partnerships with the Mall, if that is where the interim facility would be. Possibly conducting Children's programming at Lakeforest Mall. He also stated that if the Library Department budget is to be cut, that it be done in a way that as soon as the funding is available, it can bounce back. (Paulette Dickerson)

Questions from the LAC meeting:

Has a decision been made on the interim facility?

A decision to have an interim facility was made five years ago. Due to the fiscal crisis, Mr. Leggett is reviewing all projects.

Will there be information about the Library Summit posted where the Library community can access it?

The Summit website will be transferred to a Facebook site.

The first forum sponsored by the University of Maryland has been scheduled for **Chevy Chase** on either the 23rd or the 25th. The Friends of the Library will provide the refreshments and volunteers will help with the setup. The forums are conducted by the Kettering Foundation. Twenty to thirty individuals meet to discuss an issue pertinent to the community. This program is in the current edition of *Check Us Out*. (Otto Lewis)

White Oak had an LAC meeting on December 1. The issue of individual libraries having authors or musicians appear at their branches was discussed. The question was asked if the Friends of the Library could sponsor such programs. (David Chiles)

The Friends of the Library (FOL) can sponsor these programs as long as the FOL does the work and does not require staff to do the work. The FOL must check with the Agency Manager to ensure that there is enough library staff available on the day of the event to accommodate the additional customers generated by the program.

Director Hamilton stated that MCPL has cut back on programming. The core business of the library system is answering information questions and providing early literacy. Because of the number of staff members that have been lost over the last year and a half, the capacity to answer information questions and do collection development is all that MCPL currently has. Some programming can be done, but the focus is on early literacy preschool programming. The system, through a grant from Friends of the Library, is bringing event programs and author programs. Staff has been asked to get volunteers to help with discussion groups.

Bethesda Library and the Bethesda FOL have a good program model. The FOL meets with the Agency Manager; they have a plan for six months out; and they have volunteers. On the days of the programs, there is a flurry of activity; many attendees; staff are at their desks and the Friends are doing the work.

The **Wheaton LAC** met on Monday night, December 7. Fran Ware, Agency Manager, gave a run down on what the budget cuts mean for the Wheaton Library – cutting the number of periodicals in half and less frequency of the cleaning of the restrooms. The cleaning of the restrooms is a major concern, and a new cleaning schedule is being planned.

The branch received a grant from the FOL to create a laptop lane. This lane will make use of the space downstairs. Furniture and vending machines will be added. It was also mentioned how few children use the libraries these days; they find most of their information online from home.

The LAC is scheduled to meet with Virtual Services in a couple of months.

Poolesville LAC had a discussion regarding the handling of booksale money which was historically handled by staff. Since the directive went out that staff should not be involved in FOL sales, there are questions about the placement of the money box, who will empty the box and who will count the funds.

Question: Were congratulatory notes sent to Councilmembers Floreen and Ervin? Was a thank you note sent to Phil Andrews?

Chair Brodsky did send congratulatory emails on behalf of the Board to the councilmembers and is working on the thank you letter for Councilmember Andrews.

Question: Where is the Board on planning to work with the Council for the next budget rounds?

The same can be done as in the past – using talking points, meet with each councilmember individually. The message this year should be that it is appreciated that the line has been held on cutting hours and closing branches, but Libraries has already taken a large hit, and the rest of the County departments need to catch up.

Mr. Leggett will again be conducting budget forums. A list of dates and locations will be emailed to the Board members. As in the past, Board members are encouraged to attend the forums, introduce themselves as members of the Library Board and let the County Executive know that his support of Libraries is appreciated.

Chair Brodsky will compose an email to be sent to all LAC members regarding the budget forums.

Board members and LAC members are encouraged to visit the websites of the councilmembers to see if and when they will have public forums. This information should be sent out to the memberships. There is also value in signing up for the councilmembers' newsletters.

It was suggested that as in previous years, the Board should host a breakfast and invite the councilmembers, council staff and the Library Director.

Chevy Chase has held candidate forums in the past. Aspen Hill will be conducting one on Saturday.

Director Hamilton suggested that the Legislative and Public Affairs Subcommittee meet with her and Eric Carzon so that the information that has been given to staff regarding the impact of the budget cuts can be shared.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Nomination Committee

The Nomination Committee to interview the applicants for the Board vacancies: Art Brodsky, Paulette Dickerson, Jill Lewis, Otto Lewis, Lois Neuman and Parker Hamilton.

After discussion regarding the interview format, it was decided that in order to maintain consistency and be fair and equitable, that each candidate will be interviewed by the full panel.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

B. Parker Hamilton